

IN THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A powered test-tube agitation device ~~including a~~
comprising

an agitation plate having a rest for a bottom of a test tube to be agitated to
rest and a powered mechanism ~~operating~~ operatively connected to the agitation
plate to put the plate in agitation, ~~characterized in that the device comprises~~

an optical detection means for optical detection ~~of the entry of an object into~~
in a predetermined zone above the plate, the optical detection means being
operatively connected to the powered mechanism to activate operation thereof
when an object is detected entering said predetermined zone above the agitation
plate.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the optical detection means includes a photoelectric
reflection detection device.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 2,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the photoelectric reflection detection device includes
an infrared emitter and an infrared receiver arranged close to the side of said plate.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the optical detection means includes a barrier
photoelectric detection device.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the optical detection means activates the powered
mechanism with a predetermined delay.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 5,
characterized in that the delay is between 10 ms and 1 s and preferably 100 ms.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the powered mechanism is started with a
predetermined ramp of increase in the frequency and/or amplitude of the plate

agitation movement.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The device in accordance with claim 2,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the photoelectric reflection detection device is
arranged in front of the rest and turned towards the rear of the device.

Claim 9 (new): A powered test-tube agitation device comprising
a plate having a rest for a test tube to be agitated and a powered mechanism
operating the plate in agitation, and
an optical detection means for optical detection of the entry of an object into
a predetermined zone above the plate, the optical detection means being
operatively connected to the powered mechanism to activate operation thereof,
the optical detection means activating the powered mechanism with a
predetermined delay.

Claim 10 (new): The device in accordance with claim 9, wherein the delay is
between 10 ms and 1 s and preferably 100 ms.

Claim 11 (new): A powered test-tube agitation device comprising

a plate having a rest for a test tube to be agitated and a powered mechanism operating the plate in agitation, and

an optical detection means for optical detection of the entry of an object into a predetermined zone above the plate, the optical detection means being operatively connected to the powered mechanism to activate operation thereof,

the powered mechanism being started with a predetermined ramp of increase in a frequency and/or an amplitude of the plate agitation movement.

Claim 12 (new): A powered test-tube agitation device comprising

a plate having a rest for a test tube to be agitated and a powered mechanism operating the plate in agitation,

an optical detection means for optical detection of the entry of an object into a predetermined zone above the plate, the optical detection means being operatively connected to the powered mechanism to activate operation thereof,

the optical detection means including a photoelectric reflection detection device,

the photoelectric reflection detection device being arranged in front of the rest and turned towards a rear of the device.